

March 4, 2015

HB6281 - Saving Lives by Donation Education

I would like to say hello and thank you to Senator Gerratano and Representative Ritter and the Public Health Committee for the opportunity to be here today in support of House Bill No 6281. My name is Alison Keating and I have worked with Donate Life CT for 2 years. Prior to that I worked in Westport CT as a certified health teacher, and prior to that I was a patient advocate at Greenwich Hospital. As a health teacher I had the privilege of having a young woman from Donate Life CT, named Kerry (a heart recipient) come into my health class and share her story with my students. I was truly moved by her story. Even though I was already signed up to be an organ donor, I was amazed at what I learned from her presentation. As a teacher I was most interested in what my students took away from her presentation. The higher level, critical thinking discussions we had would astonish you. Every student had a moving reaction to it. We discussed what it takes to make the decision and what it means to make such a selfless decision. Again this was an in depth personal discussion with a group of juniors in high school about to make one of the first major decisions of their lives.

The presentation from Donate Life CT opened up the discussion about donation and helped them all make an informed decision. I believe in education and raising awareness of organ and tissue donation. I believe that when people of all ages hear personal stories about donation it moves them to make a decision. This bill supports our organization to educate the public about organ and tissue donation and increasing the number of registered donors in the state of Connecticut.

In conclusion, we are proposing in this bill a voluntary check off when registering a vehicle at the DMV. We believe there is no fiscal component to this, and we are proposing language to reimburse operating costs of the establishment of this fund for the inaugural year. This bill creates a fund that will support further educational opportunities for the public to learn about the living saving gift of donation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Alison Keating